Tampa Bay Times

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ACQUITTED

SENATE CLEARS PRESIDENT OF BOTH IMPEACHMENT CHARGES.

GRIPAS YURI | ZUMAPRESS.com

The U.S. Senate acquitted President Donald Trump on Wednesday, ending only the third presidential impeachment trial in American history with votes that split the country and tested civic norms.

BY JENNIFER HABERKORN AND SARAH D. WIRE
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

WASHINGTON

The Senate on Wednesday acquitted President Donald Trump of abusing the power of his office and obstructing Congress' investigation into his conduct, ending the third presidential impeachment trial in American history.

Republicans and Democrats had appeared to be marching toward an entirely party-line vote. But Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, the party's presidential candidate eight years ago, became the only GOP lawmaker to join Democrats in voting to convict the president for what he called "an appalling abuse of public trust."

With Chief Justice John Roberts presiding, senators sworn to do "impartial justice" stood at their desks to state their votes for the roll call — "guilty" or "not guilty" — in a swift tally almost exclusively along party lines. Visitors, including the president's allies, watched from the crowded gallery. Roberts read the declaration that Trump "be, and is hereby, acquitted of the charges."

The outcome Wednesday followed months of remarkable impeachment proceedings, from Speaker Nancy Pelosi's House to Mitch McConnell's Senate, reflecting the nation's unrelenting partisan divide three years into the Trump presidency.

What started as Trump's request for Ukraine to "do us a favor" spun into a far-reaching, 28,000-page report compiled by House investigators accusing an American president of engaging in shadow diplomacy that threatened U.S. foreign relations for personal, political gain as he pressured the ally to investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden ahead of the next election.

No president has ever been removed by the Senate.

A politically emboldened Trump had eagerly predicted vindication, deploying the verdict as a political anthem in his reelection bid. The president claims he did nothing wrong, decrying the "witch hunt" and "hoax" as extensions of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian 2016 campaign interference by those out to get him from the start of his presidency.

See ACQUITTED, 13A

More coverage

President Trump made bold claims about the economy during his State of the Union address Tuesday. PolitiFact checks them for accuracy. **13A**

High court takes on transportation tax

Justices question if Hillsborough voters who approved it have a right to apportion revenue.

BY CAITLIN JOHNSTON
Times Staff Writer

TALLAHASSEE — Is it the will of the voters or a fatally flawed ballot question?

Florida Supreme Court justices fired off dozens of questions during a hearing Wednesday morning to determine whether to uphold a 1-cent transportation tax that Hillsborough County voters approved in November 2018.

Many of the questions, asked as attorneys made oral arguments, focused on two issues: whether restrictions on how to spend the tax revenue can be removed while leaving the tax in place and whether the measure presented to voters violated state law.

The hearing lasted less than an hour and was the final stop in a 14-month legal battle that began soon after 57 percent of Hillsborough voters said yes to the sales tax increase.

The measure is expected to raise $280 million a year over 30 years for transit, bike, pedestrian and road projects. But in separate lawsuits, Hillsborough resident Bob Emerson and Hillsborough County Commissioner Stacy White argued that the tax is unconstitutional and usurps power granted only to the

See TAX, 9A

Trial date set in theater shooting

Curtis Reeves Jr. is scheduled to face charges Oct. 5 in the deadly Wesley Chapel incident from 2014. Changes in how the state applies the stand your ground law led to complications in his case. **Local, 3A**

Hillsborough to start needle exchange

Commissioners gave final approval for the program, expected to begin in March. The goal is to combat the spread of HIV, hepatitis and other diseases among intravenous drug users. **Local, 4A**

Latin Chamber looks to fill a void

The bay area group, which launched last month and has 40 companies so far, will sponsor business showcases and networking events, but also plans to start a tech accelerator. **Business, 6A**

Local football stars heading south

Florida International is the bay area winner for college football signing day, swooping up four local players in the 2020 class. The school's coach has put a focus on statewide stars. **Sports, 1B**

Very Windy

8 a.m.	Noon	4 p.m.	8 p.m.
70°	77°	76°	73°

80% chance of rain

More, back page of Sports

Vol. 136 No. 198

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INDEX

Astrology	F	Crossword	F
Business	6A	Editorials	12A
Classified	F	Lottery	2A
Comics	F	Puzzles	F

7 89067 19941 3

Kirk Douglas (1916 — 2020)

'Spartacus' star dies at age 103

The actor was one of the most famous leading men in the mid-20th century.

Kirk Douglas, with his dimpled chin and chiseled features, thrived in Hollywood's golden age.

BY DENNIS MCLELLAN
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

LOS ANGELES — Kirk Douglas, the dimple-chinned screen icon who was known for bringing an explosive, clenched-jawed intensity to a memorable array of heroes and heels in films such as *Spartacus* and *Champion* and for playing an off-screen role as a maverick independent producer who helped end the Hollywood blacklist, has died. He was 103.

Mr. Douglas, who continued to act occasionally after overcoming a stroke in 1996 that impaired his speech, died Wednesday, *People* magazine reported.

Mr. Douglas, who was stage-trained, earned the first Oscar nomination of his long acting career playing one of the post-World War II era's anti-heroes: the ruthlessly ambitious boxer in the 1949 drama *Champion*.

See DOUGLAS, 2A